

Lauer-Gerhard Farm (Reifsnyder Farm)  
Farm Lane  
Brownsville Vicinity  
Berks County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1954

HABS  
PA,  
G-BROWNV.  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
TA  
6-Brown.V.  
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. PA-1954

LAUER/GERHARD FARM (REIFSNYDER FARM)

Location: West side of Spring Creek, 1,400' northeast of  
Brownsville Road at Brownsville Bridge over  
Spring Creek, approximately 7 miles west of  
Reading, North Heidelberg Township, Berks Co-  
unity, Pennsylvania.

USGS Sinking Spring Quadrangle, Universal Trans-  
verse Mercator Coordinates: 18.408370. 4469520.

PRESENT  
OWNER:

United States Department of the Army  
U.S. Army Engineer District, Philadelphia.

SIGNIFANCE

The Lauer/Gerhardt farmstead is a well preserved  
example of a Pennsylvania German Family Farm.  
Its layout illustrates socio-historical continuity  
and spatial integrity through nearly 200 years,  
and typifies the ecological suitability which  
characterizes this aspect of rural folk culture  
(Glassie 1968: 192-195). There has been virtually  
no alteration in the original farm plan of struc-  
tures built solidly of native materials and arranged  
along the edge of a hill bank so as to take ad-

vantage of the climate and topography next to Spring Creek. The farmstead encompasses the key elements of this pre-urban/industrial institution in balanced geographical fit, with each building expressing both the cultural fixedness of Pennsylvania Germans, and the sense of continuity that derives from many generations of the same family working the same farm (Fletcher 1950: 46 - 51, Long 1972). The earliest part of the heavy fieldstone rear building dates between 1765 - 1786, with a two story addition tradition claims was built circa 1813. The main house, also stone, is probably late 18th century, and the long bank barn is a complex set of joined units, representing integrated growth from the late 18th to the 20th century.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Dates of Erection: The earliest construction was between 1765 and 1786, which is the period when the farm was owned by Michael Lauer. The value was only £ 270 in 1765 when John Morris, a landholder, sold it to Michael Lauer. It had risen to £ 1500 when Lauer sold it to Christian Lauer in 1786, and this five fold increase is evidence of major improvements to the tract. A residence and the first units

of the long, multi-component barn structure were probably built during this two-decade span. The small, low portion of the "rear" residence (Structure 2), with its large cooking and baking fireplace/oven and attached bake-oven extending north, is logically the first permanent residence structure. The main ("front") residence (Structure 1) was probably built later when more labor force and capital were available and as family size dictated.

Christian Lauer held the farm only two years, and sold it to Adam Kalmbach, at a slight loss in 1788. The 1790 census shows that Kalbach's family consisted of only one adult male, but included six males under 16 years of age, and three females (U.S. Census Bureau 1900). It is likely that a family of ten was living in quarters bigger than the kitchen portion of (Structure 2), so the main residence may have existed by this time. Family tradition, based on Peter Gerhar 's will of 1808, suggests that the two story addition to (Structure 2) may have been built as a "widow's house" in 1813, but a close reading of the document fails to confirm this. An accurate date and sequence could only be obtained by archaeological testing and detailed architectural examination.

Dates of other outbuildings are not known, but they evidently range from early 19th century (Structure 3, the half-buried bank larder) through mid - late 19th century (Structure 5, the two story wagon shed), to a frame garage/workshop and a concrete block milkhouse (Structures 4 & 6) built in the second quarter of the 20th century. The barn also contains segments representing several dates of construction.

2. Architect: not know (probably members of the Lauer, Kalbach, and Gerhard families)
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The property (now listed as Reifsnyder; Tract No. 412) was purchased from the Proprietors in 1739 by John Morris (Philadelphia Deeds, Book A, Vol. 10. p. 122) and sold by him to Michael Lauer in 1765 (Berks Co. Deeds Book A, Vol. 4 188-190). As stated, initial construction was probably during Michael Lauer's ownership. He sold to Christian Lauer in 1786, and in 1788 the latter sold to Adam Kalbach (Berks Co. Deeds, vol. 10, pp 46-47, Vol. 11 pp 496-499). Eleven years later, in 1799, Adam sold it to George Kalbach, and he in turn sold it to Peter Gerhard in 1803 (Berks Co. Deeds Vol. 17, pp 257-258, Vol. 22, pp 209-210).

7

Peter Gerhard (also known as Johann Peter Gerhard, 1744-1813) was a prominent German settler of the Tulpehocken district, having come from the Zweibruken to Philadelphia in 1764 (Strassburger 1966: 695) and having married Salome Lauer in 1770. They had six sons and one daughter, born between 1770 and 1786 (Hain's Church Book 1915: 238). After making his homestead near Wernersville, he acquired substantial land holdings along both sides of Spring Creek, including this farm bought from George Kalbach in 1803. His will of 9 August 1808 (Berks Co. Wills C-5, p. 299-301). divides his holdings among his children with Mathias and Peter (1st and 3rd sons) sharing "the place which I bought of George Kalbach, excepting that John (4th son) shall have thirty five acres thereof..." At the death of this first generation immigrant Gerhar in 1813, the farms along Spring Creek went to the various children. Of these, Mathias died single in 1841, so that his brother Peter became possessed of Mathias' interest in what had been the southern portion of the Lauer and then Kalbach property. This Peter Gerhard (1773-1851) in his will, dated 8 September 1842 (Berks Co. Wills 9-570, 9 pp 57-59) left the farm

on the west side of the creek to his first son, John, and an adjacent property (later known as the Ruth Farm) on the east side of Spring Creek to his other son, Benjamin. The references to property owner's adjacent to the main Kalbach property in the 1808 will (Brossman and Klopp families), and to owners adjoining the land west of the creek in the 1842 will (John Gerhard Senior and two Ruth family farms) make it clear that the farmstead now under study was on the 35 acres left by the original (John) Peter Gerhard to his fourth son John (referred to as John Gerhard Senior in 1842).

This John Gerhard died in 1853, leaving the farmstead to his sons John Peter and Elogius. On the 1861/62 map, it is (John) Peter who is shown as the owner ("Pet. Gerhard"). Elogius died on 21 Nov. 1872 leaving two children Sara (then age 16) and John P. (aged 15), his wife Maria Ann (Heck) having died ten years before Elogius (Hain's Church Book 1915: 239, 241). Less than three weeks later his brother John Peter died, on 7 Dec. 1872, leaving his real estate to his niece and nephew Sara and John.

John P. Gerhard (1856-1925), son of Elogius, held onto the farmstead and sold it on 2 March 1919 to Charles Fisher, at which time this property

left the Gerhard family (Berks Co. Deeds Vol. 478, pp 441-443). Two other Gerhard farms, later known as the Ruth and Staudt farms, remained in family hands through male or female lines until the mid-twentieth century.

The Lauer/Gerhard farmstead was sold by Fisher to Henry S. Werner in 21 March 1929, and by him to Earl Keith on 2 Oct. 1929 (Berks Co. Deeds) Vol. 623, pp 692-93, Vol. 660 pp 575-73). Keith held it for over a decade, through the 1930's, and on 17 Oct. 1941 sold it to Luke Dunkleberger (Berks Co. Deeds Vol. 853, pp 400-401). Another rapid change occurred and the farm changed hands after less than two years, with William B. and Gertrude F. Sheidy buying it on 25 April 1942 (Berks Co. Deeds Vol. 880 pp 584-85). The Sheidy's sold it to Richard E. and Frances J. Dunkle on 24 June 1957, and the Dunkle's to Thomas C. and Geraldine R. Reifsnyder on 5 Aug. 1967. (Berks Co. Deeds Vol. 1268, pp 41-42, vol. 1430 pp 886 - 888). The Reifsnyder's owned the land until the Corps of Engineers acquired it during the 1970's.

4. Builder, Contractor & Suppliers: Not known

5. Original Plans & Construction: Not known



6. Alterations and Additions: A two story unit was added to the one and a half story stone 'rear' residence (Structure 2) that later seems to have served as a summer kitchen and bake house. Family tradition associates this with the period around 1813, but the 1808 will in question does not support that interpretation, so this cannot be determined on the basis of available documentary evidence. The barn has had numerous additions.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure

Johan (or Johann) Peter Gerhard was a prominent early settler in the region, and served in the Seventh Company of Foot in the Third Battalion of Militia in Berks Co. during or immediately after the American Revolution (Hain's Church Book 1916: 17). His first household was near Wernersville, 3 miles south of the Lauer/Gerhard farm, and he had other holdings besides the land on Spring Creek. This successful pioneer farmer and his descendants resided on the Lauer/Gerhard farm for 116 years, from 1803 to 1919. Gerhard family tradition says that over 75 family members "called this home" during that period (Thomas J. Gerhard 1 March 1977).

The Gerhard's had numerous children, and a surprisingly large number lived into their sixties and seventies. This, combined with a close-knit pattern of intermarriage, created a stable pattern of land ownership and use throughout the 19th century in this area. Ultimately there were three farmsteads in a small triangle of land, the Lauer/Gerhard farm west of Spring Creek and the Ruth and Staudt farms east of it, all occupied by descendants of (Johann) Peter Gerhard.

In addition, the even earlier Lauer family, about which little is known, owned the farm from 1765 to 1788, and must have erected the initial structures there before 1786.

C. Bibliography

a. Primary and Unpublished sources

Berks County Court House, Reading, Pa. Deeds  
Wills.

Berks County Historical Society, Reading, Pa.

Vital Statistics files

Tax Records

Gerhar Scrap Book

Gerhard, Thomas J.

Collection of family traditions and documentary information (contained in correspondence with Brian Guss, District Historian, U.S. Army Engineer District, Philadelphia, Feb. - March 1977).

b. Secondary and Published sources

Fletcher, Stevenson Whitcomb

1950 Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life 1640-1840. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg

Glassie, Henry

1968 Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Hain's Church Book

1916 History of St. John's (Hain's) Reformed Church. Wernersville, Pennsylvania (compiled by Adam G. Lerch and others).

Long, Amos Jr.

1972 The Pennsylvania German Family Farm. Publications of the Pennsylvania German Society Vol. VI, Breinigsville, Pa.

Meiser, George M. IX

1971 "Historical Survey of Blue Marsh Project Area" Historical Review of Berks County Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 pp 98-110 (Summer 1971)

Montgomery, Morton L.

1883 Political Handbook of Berks County, Pennsylvania, 1752-1883. Press of B.F. Owen, Reading Pa.

1909 Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks County, Pennsylvania. J.H. Beers & Co., Chicago.

Strassburger, Ralph Beaver, L.L.D.

1916 Pennsylvania German Pioneers.

U.S. Census Bureau

1900 Heads of Family at the First Census of the United States, 1790, Pennsylvania. U.S.

Government Printing Office, Washington,  
D.C.

#### Historic Maps Consulted

1854 Township Atlas of Berks County, Pennsylvania.

1861 Bridgen's Township Atlas of Berks County  
Pennsylvania.

1876 Historical Atlas of Berks County, Pennsyl-  
vania. A.M. Davis, . Reading Publishing Co.  
Reading Pa.

#### 4. Likely Sources of Information not yet investigated

Additional Gerhard family records, diaries, or old photographs may exist. Detailed U.S. Census records from 1800 to 1870 should be checked, as a 10 year interval "cross section" of Gerhard family members present and brief record of the farm. Business records (sales of cattle, etc.) may also yield information. Another early 19th century source is the John Mellish county maps done between 1819 and 1822 as base maps for the Pennsylvania state map of 1826. The farm was owned by six different families after it left the Gerhards in 1919. Photographs or records from this time period could help to reconstruct the later history of the farmstead. Finally, a major source of information which has been overlooked is still present at the farmstead itself. A systematic archaeological survey of the structures and grounds could provide specific information concerning sequence of structures,

datable artifacts indicating time of various construction, and data concerning the industrious conservative cultural adaptation of these people. This would be particularly applicable to the early period (Lauer and Kalbach families in the 18th century) for which so little is known. Another valid source of physical information is still present in the working structures (barn complex, wagon house, food storage-cellar complex) which were recorded photographically but not architecturally. It is likely that as much can be learned concerning life on this Pennsylvania German farmstead from careful study of these structures and the surrounding grounds as from recording details of the main house. This is particularly true because the importance of the Lauer/Gerhard farmstead lies in the unified complex of structures and site development through time and the efforts of the family members, rather than in the construction details of the main house.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

#### 1. Architectural character:

The Lauer/Gerhard farmstead is a typical example of massive granite stone construction in a Pennsylvania German farm. The cluster of seven buildings is the result of almost two hundred years of development. The two late eighteenth/early nineteenth century heavy granite stone structures are residences which predate the other buildings and are the subject of this report. Together with the Bank Barn, Milk House, Wagon House, Garage and Food Storage Larder and Cellar Complex, the Small House and Main House comprise a complex which achieves an admirable functional and ecological harmony in their relationship to one another and to the land. The vernacular style of the two dwellings in the complex and the economical use of the local stone are a study in thrift and structural instinct not uncommon in the Tulpehocken region.

#### 2. Condition of fabric:

While in use, both residential structures have undergone some cosmetic alterations including modernizations of the buildings to provide for central heating. During recent years the farmstead has been abandoned and consequently vandalization has taken a toll. Destruction has ranged from broken window glass to the removal of a structural box window frame and an architecturally significant corner cupboard. It appears that the window frame was removed in order to gain clearance for the old corner cupboard. Attempts have been made to secure the buildings, but due to the remote and secluded location the door and window coverings were removed, inevitably leaving the structures and their built in-contents to the worst forces of man and nature.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions:

The Main House is two and one half storeys high and thirty-two feet (32') long by twenty-seven feet (27') deep. It is a stone structure with a full basement. The overall height of the structure from the basement floor is thirty-four feet and nine inches (34'-9") to the interior of the roof ridge in the attic. The front facade is divided into three window bays. This is the east elevation, which has a three feet, three inch (3'-3") high porch with shed roof supported on wooden posts eight feet (8'-0") high. At the south end of this porch on the east facade there is an exterior stair toward the wall of the structure, which allows access to the basement. Directly adjacent to the basement stair there is a set of steps giving access from grade to the porch floor. The porch extends eight feet (8'-0") from the east facade and covers the entire width of the building at the first floor.

The Small House is a combination of a one storey dwelling and a later addition of a two and one half storey structure. Their total length is thirty-five feet, eleven inches (35'-11"), with a maximum depth of seventeen feet, three inches (17'-3"). A six foot (6') oven enclosure projects from the north face of the one storey structure.

2. Foundations:

Both buildings have massive fieldstone rubble foundations.

3. Wall construction, finish, and color:

In both the Main House and the Small House the massive grey fieldstone walls are laid up in a random rubble pattern with exaggerated naturally shaped quoins at the corners. The stone work progresses from a roughly squared fieldstone on the one storey portion to a more random pattern on the two and a half storey addition. Finally, a very random and irregular coursing was used in the construction of the exterior walls of the Main House. The repointed mortar joints of the Main House stone exterior walls are raised, in a 1920's style, so that the thin lines of the face of the joint (or mortar bead) could be painted white.

4. Structural system, framing:

The Main House has load bearing masonry walls with a central beam running roughly along the North-South axis, and floor joists spanning the distance between this center beam and the masonry bearing walls. This situation occurs at the first, second, and attic levels. The roof framing consists of rafters pinned at the ridge, with no ridge beam. Collar tie beams are judged to have all been added later, since there are iron nails of modern manufacture used to connect the collar ties to the rafters.

The Small House is similar to the Main House in structural system and framing. Its shallow depth allows the floor joists to span the East-West axis directly between masonry bearing walls.



5. Porches:

A plain wood porch was added to the front facade of the Main House in the nineteenth century. Four square solid pine wood posts support a lean-to roof over the wooden tongue and groove deck. A plain rail with square balusters exists in only one bay of the porch. The other two bays of balustrade are now gone. Beaded tongue and groove boards (or roofers) enclose the roof framing of the porch, acting as the ceiling, and are also used as vertical siding at the sides, or cheeks, where the slope of the roof shed meets the horizontal beam at eight foot (8'-0") height. A lattice of horizontal and vertical lath pieces skirts the area below the deck. Only one section of this remains.

The rear porch, with Victorian scrollwork, mentioned in the National Register of Historic Buildings nomination form, was demolished some time before this survey was begun. All that remains is a concrete slab on grade and some debris.

The surviving porch is three feet, three inches (3'-3") above grade on the East side of the Main House, while the missing porch was on grade on the West side of the building.

6. Chimneys:

Three chimneys rise above the roof of the Main House. At either end of the ridge is a brick chimney. The shafts of both are engaged to the interior stonework. Both appear to have been rebuilt above the roof line. Neither of these chimneys is in use today.

The third chimney rises along the outside of the southern facade. It was probably added at the time of some renovations to the heating system, and is constructed of modern concrete block.

Each section of the Small House has its own chimney. A small brick chimney for the bake oven, a massive brick chimney for the large fireplace of the one storey section, and a third brick chimney for the two and a half storey addition. Each appears to have been at least partially rebuilt since the end of the nineteenth century.

7. Openings:

The main facade is divided into three bays, with the main entry farthest to the North. Access is from the South side, up wooden stairs and across the raised porch deck to the front door. There is also a batten door at the basement level under the porch.

There are two windows to the South of the front door, and the three windows at the second floor level approximate the spacing of the first floor openings. The North and South elevations have two very small basement, first, and second floor windows, with a smaller attic window asymetrically placed between them and to one side of the chimney.

The rear doorway, on the West facade is located to the South of center, with a window flanking either side. Two windows on the second floor occur above the doorway and above the window to the North of the door.

The door and window frames are all structural wooden box frames.

A type of ogee reverse moulding is used throughout as exterior trim. The front and rear doors are divided into a single piece of glass above the lock rail and two raised panels, side by side, below. There is a difference in the door frames. The rear door has a transom window above the door opening. The batten door in the basement is made up of beaded tongue and groove pine. The window frames are structural wooden box frames pegged where the jambs meet the lintel, and all have a solid timber sill. The one-over-one double hung, wood sash are modern replacement windows. No shutters remain, although two drive pintles can be found on a first floor rear window frame.

The Small House has six openings on its front facade. The one storey portion has an entry door and, to its North, one window. The two and a half storey addition is divided into two bays: an entry door to the South, and a single window to the North. The two second floor windows are in line with the first storey openings below. All frames are structural.

The North elevation is a progression of gable forms, each building rising behind the other. First the bake oven, then the one storey structure with one empty window opening to the East of the chimney.

In the rear, the two and a half storey addition has a small attic opening slightly to the West of center. The West elevation is very austere. Two windows in the one storey kitchen open almost at grade, and look out to the fields. A doorway at the second floor marks the South facade. From this point one can walk out to the fields or down concrete stairs to the court between this structure and the Main House. To the West of the doorway is a second floor window. On line below, at the foot of the concrete stair, is a first floor window. At the attic level a small window is centered above the stair.

The openings in the Small House are basically the same as those in the Main House. The frames are structural, the trim is similar, although plainer. Most of the windows have been removed, with the exception of a portion of a six light top sash. The remains of this sash do not show remarkable age. The front door of the two and a half storey addition is of interest because of the simple pediment above its head. The door itself has four lights of glass above the lock rail. Below are two raised panels, side by side.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

The Main House is surmounted by a simple gable roof with a standing seam metal covering over old wood shingles. The lean-to roof of the front porch is covered by wood shingles.

The roofs over the three sections of the Small House are also gabled and all are covered by a corrugated metal, like that used on temporary structures.

b. Cornice, eaves:

The wooden cornice of the Main House is a typical box cornice, made up of a cyma recta crown mould, with a smaller ogee reverse below. The soffit sets back here and the ornamentation is completed with a combination of an ovolo and cavetto formed moulding. The main cornice and soffit turn the corner of the house, tuck under the rake, and return into the stone work. The gutter system consists of a suspended half round metal gutter and plain round downspouts.

The Small House has the ends of the roof rafters exposed and resting on a beaded fascia board. The rafters are plumb cut. No gutter system remains.

## C. Description of Interior - Main House:

## 1. Floor plans:

The basement is one unobstructed space with a wooden winder stairway in the North East corner of the room. A stone chimney foundation on the North wall supported the first and second floor fireplaces in the early nineteenth century. The area of the basement could only have been used as a root cellar and larder for food storage. Since central heating was installed, the only use has been as the mechanical space.

The first floor is partitioned into four corner rooms. An inspection of the interior walls revealed two types of wall construction. The East-West wall is of earlier vintage than the North-South wall. This suggests either an original two room layout or else some major alteration has taken place. The original fireplaces have also been removed. Without a more thorough investigation one can only assume the communal activities of the family would have taken place here. An entry, a kitchen, if it wasn't located in the basement, a dining room, and a living room are possible uses. The stairway remains in the North East corner, and becomes a more finished winder stair. The second floor is also divided into four corner rooms, with the interior walls all of original plank construction. Two bedrooms are on the South, the North East sitting room contains the winder stair, and the North West room, which is the smallest of the four, has been converted to a bathroom.

The attic is one unfinished space reached by a continuation of the winder stair.

2. Stairway:

In the North East corner of the house a stair rises from the basement to the attic. The basement stair is an open stringer, open riser, L shaped wood stair, with nine treads and ten risers. There is a landing at mid level. Portions have been rebuilt in the twentieth century, but original eighteenth and nineteenth century materials remain. The first floor winder stairway is enclosed by a beaded tongue and groove cupboard and sheathing. Wrought nails can be seen by examining the underside of the stairway, indicating a probable late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date of construction. Thirteen tapered treads and fourteen eight inch (8") risers wind up to the second floor. A plain wood newel with three horizontal rails encloses the stair opening at the second floor level. The stairway continues to wind up to the attic with twelve treads and thirteen risers eight inches (8") high. Although the structure is hidden at this level, it can be assumed that this construction is original to the building.

3. Flooring:

With the exception of a small dirt area in the South East corner, the basement floor is a poured concrete slab. The first and second floors are of random width tongue and groove boards ranging from five and three-quarters inches ( $5\frac{3}{4}$ ") to eleven and three-quarters inches ( $11\frac{3}{4}$ ") in width. Some sections of

the first floor have been replaced with two and three-quarters inch ( $2\frac{3}{4}$ " ) tongue and groove flooring. Twentieth century tile and linoleum have been laid directly over the floor boards.

The boards on the second floor have been painted but not covered over. The flooring used in the attic is tongue and groove six and three-quarters inches ( $6\frac{3}{4}$ " ) to eighteen inches (18" ) wide, with a bead on the underside. This face is exposed as the second floor ceiling between joists. No damping or plaster was used between the painted joists.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The finish of the stone walls is either white wash, as is found in the basement, or finished white plaster applied directly to the stonework in the living areas. The interior partitions are of plank construction with plaster on split lath. The exception is the North-South wall on the first floor, which is plaster on sawn lath on wood studs. In most cases the walls are covered by wall paper or paint. Ceiling finishes vary. The basement overhead is white washed joist and plank construction. The first floor ceiling is modern painted gypsum board applied directly to the second floor joists. The second floor has exposed attic framing, half inch ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " ) gypsum board applied directly to the joists and plaster on sawn lath ceilings. All surfaces are painted. The roof framing is exposed in the attic.



5. Openings:

All the windows in the Main House are uniform. They consist of double hung sash in structural box frames. All are set in plain wood recesses with deep sills, except three windows in the third floor South East room, which have paneled recesses. Door frames in plank partitions have solid wood frames with plaster ground mouldings. Six panel doors are typical throughout the house. Original surface mounted locksets have been removed. All existing woodwork is painted.

6. Decorative features and trim:

A beaded tongue and groove wainscot was applied over the plaster wall surface in the kitchen and entry on the first floor.

Photographs taken before this survey was begun show a corner cupboard in the South East room of the second floor. A chair rail which still exists in the room divided the unit into two sections. The upper portion had a pair of two panel arched doors and an ornamental keystone in the arch above. A crown moulding terminated the cabinet at the bottom of the ceiling joists. The lower section had a pair of single panel doors. A chair rail, plainer than the one mentioned above, is found in the existing sitting room and bathroom.

7. Mechanical:

Any original or historically important heating systems have been removed.

C. Description of Interior - Small House:

1. Floor plans:

The first floor is made up of two rooms. A living room in the two and a half storey addition contains a straight run stair in the North West corner that leads to the upper floors. A smaller sized kitchen in the one storey section has a large fireplace on the North wall. The original pot crane has been removed. An oven wing adjoins the kitchen to the North. The rooms are joined by a doorway in the common wall.

The second floor contains a bedroom. A doorway in the South West corner of the room leads out to an exterior concrete stair. The interior wooden stair continues up to an unfinished attic.

2. Stairway:

The wooden stair appears to be original. Construction methods, materials, and fasteners are similar to those used in the stair in the Main House. A wood tongue and groove plank partition now encloses the stair, but it was probably originally open with a balustrade.

3. Flooring:

The first floor is a slab on grade. The second and attic floors are random width tongue and groove boards, one inch(1") thick and ranging from six and one half inches ( $6\frac{1}{2}$ ") to twelve inches (12") wide. The flooring is natural.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Finish plaster is applied directly to the stonework. The East wall of the living room has floor to ceiling wood tongue and groove paneling applied to furring strips attached to the plaster work. The ceiling conditions vary from exposed floor framing to plain tongue and groove ceiling boards. All surfaces are painted. The roof framing is exposed in the attic and is unpainted.

5. Openings:

No interior doors remain. The windows are similar to those in the Main House. They consist of structural box frames with double hung sash. All windows are set in plaster wall recesses with deep wooden sills and great sturdy timber lintels at the heads.

D. Site:

The Lauer/Gerhard farmstead is situated along the foot of a hill on the West bank of Spring Creek. The site is accessible from the West on Farm Lane. The road bends to the South. The bridge crossing Spring Creek has been destroyed.

The fronts of the buildings face a general easterly direction. The topography slopes down to the East and up to the West and the majority of the structures are set into the hillside. Yard areas are separated from the fields by stone retaining walls almost flush with the earth, and wooden picket fences. A courtyard is formed between the Main House and the Small House and Food Storage Larder and Cellar Complex to the West. There is a Wagon House on the North side of Farm Lane near the dwellings. Furthest South is a large Bank Barn consisting of a series of originally separate nineteenth century units connected by later additions. The exterior is sheathed in vertical wood siding. The end wall windows have a Palladian tri-part motif, with a central arched window flanked by two rectangular louvered vent openings.

Prepared by: Richard Tatara

McCauley Sperr, Architects

1/21/81

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

This project was undertaken by the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Philadelphia District in connection with the Blue Marsh Lake Project to produce a history and measured drawings of the Lauer/Gerhard Farm. Historic Sites Research, 86 Snowden Lane, Princeton, New Jersey (Drs. Susan Kardas and Edward Larrabee, Principal Investigators) prepared the historical data; McCauley Sperr, Architects, 2138 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Hugh J. McCauley, Principal Supervisor) prepared the measured drawings. In this work Jinny Kardas and Peter A. Primavera, Jr. participated for Historic Sites Research; Jonathan White Ericson and Richard Tatara participated for McCauley Sperr, Architects. The entire project was performed under the direction of Colonel James G. Ton, District Engineer; Mr. T. Brian Heverin, Chief, General Design Section, was Project Supervisor.